Backlog of cases in High Courts/ Supreme Court

576. SHRI S. S. SURJEWALA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of Civil, Criminal, Writs and miscellaneous cases pending in various High Courts and the Supreme Court of Indian upto 31st January, 1994; and

(b) whether Government propose to increase the number of Judges in the Supreme Court and various High Courts to expedite the backlog of the cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) The available information is furnished in the attached statement. *{See* below).

(b) At present, there is no proposal to increase the sanctioned strength of Judges of Supreme Court. It has been decided to create 60 posts of permanent/additional Judges, over and above the total- sanctioned strength of 515 permanent/ additional Judges of various High Courts in the Country to expedite the disposal of pending cases.

Statement

Pendency of cases in the Supreme Court & High Courts

Sl.N	Name of the Court	Number of cases pending
	Supreme Court	57398 (As on 3.2.94) (Admission Matters only)
	HIGH COURTS	No. of cases pending f As on 30.6.93') (Total of Civil, Criminal, Writs & Miscellaneous)
1.	Allahabad	6,95,880
2.	Andhra Pradesh	1,10,158
3.	Bombay	1,88,567
4.	Calcutta	2,26,445
5.	Delhi	1,55,345
6.	Gujarat	1,00,975
7.	Guwahati	23,994
8.	HinTachal Pradesh	18,212
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	68,321
10.	Karnataka	1,30,044
11.	Kerala	1,28,765
12.	Madhya Pradesh	82,028
13.	Madras	3,01,191
14.	Orissa	37,223
15.	Patna	79,786
16.	Punjab and Haryana	1,13,807
17.	Rajasthan	1,06,790
18.	Sikkim	74

Chief Election Commissioner's suggestions on electoral reforms

577. SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI:

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chief Election Commissioner has written to Government in December, 1992 suggesting certain electoral reforms; if so, what are the salient recommenda tions made; and

(b) what action has been taken on each of the recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Yes, Sir. The main suggestions made by the Election Commission are given in the statement which is laid on the Table of the House. *{See* below).

(b) The proposal made by the Election Commission alongwith certain other proposals on electoral reforms are under consideration of the Government and it is proposed to bring forward a comprehensive package on electoral reforms.

Statement

The main suggestions made by the Election Commission Regarding Electoral Reforms

1. The Election Commission should be a single member body.
2. The Election Commission should have an independent secretariat and the expenditure on the Commission should be ""charged" and not ""voted".
3. The electoral rolls should be revised intensively every alternate years and the summary revision in other years should countinue.
4. Multi-purpose identity cards should be issued to all Indian citizens by the concerned administrative authorities and production of such identity cards may be obligatory wherever the card holder is required to establish his identity including elections.
5. The District Electoral Officer concerned should be statutorily required to be consulted and empowered to have a say in the police arrangement for elections.
6. The political bigwigs who harbour proclaimed absconders and are seen openly in their company, should be proceeded against. The power to grant parole or remission of sentence of convicted criminals, should be sparingly exercised when the elections are imminent or in progress.
7. The unauthorised possession of ballot boxes or electronic voting machine, and unauthorised printing of ballot papers should be made congnisable offence.
8. Increase in the amount of security deposit should be for all candidates.
9. There should be a minimum of 10 proposers for every candidate drawing from different polling areas.
10. No Candidate should be allowed to contest from more than one constituency.
11. The campaign period should be reduced from 20 days to 14 days to bring down the election expenses and the administrative cost on the maintenance of law and order.
12. The Election Commission may be empowered to countermand election due to booth capturing even otherwise than on the report of the Returning Officer.
13. Every registered political party should publish its account annually and these should be audited by agencies specified by the Commission.
14. Non-maintenance of the true account of election expense or not filing of its true copy within the prescribed time and manner should be punishable with imprisonment and fine and on conviction the candidate should be disqualified for a period of 6 years.
15. The caididates who fails to lodge his election expenses return within the prescribed time, should automatically stand disqualified for a period of 5 years.
16. Violation of the Model Code of Conduct should result in the election of the candidate(s) in whose favour or with whose consent or connivance, the violations was caused, being declared void and that the candidate(s) should be disqualified for a period of six years.
17. The existing provision in section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, relating to registration of political parties, should not be deleted and there should be a specific provision to de-register a party if it violates the undertaking given under the section. The power to de-register should vest in the High Court.
18. The provisions of section 28 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and section 169 of the Representation of the People Act 1951, are violative of and repugnant to the provisions of article 324 of the Constitution. The authority to make rules should therefore, be conferred totally on the Election Commission. The Election Commission shall, however, consult the Central Government.